

October 30, 2020

**Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program
Semiannual Section B.1 Report on Section 312 Evaluation and Metrics
For the Period from April 1, 2020 – September 30, 2020**

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B.1.A. SECTION 312 EVALUATION PROGRESS

Virginia's most recent evaluation began in the fall of 2014 with the Virginia CZM Program responding to 36 evaluation questions regarding administration of the program, protection of coastal habitat, coastal hazards and sea level rise, coastal water quality, coastal-dependent uses, public access, governmental coordination, and descriptions of major achievements and challenges. NOAA then conducted an online survey of Virginia CZM stakeholders and partners, and in May 2015 conducted interviews of key partners on identified target areas. A public meeting was held on May 12, 2015.

Stakeholders interviewed by the NOAA team described the program as *partner-oriented* and *having effective partnerships with local communities and regional and non-profit groups*. "Flexible to meet the needs of locals" and "inclusionary" were some of the ways stakeholders expressed partnership demonstrated by Virginia CZM.

The three target areas identified by the NOAA team to evaluate the Virginia CZM Program were: 1) Restoring and Protecting Coastal Habitats and increasing Public Access, 2) Ocean Planning, and 3) Coastal Resilience. Preliminary accomplishments and recommendations identified by NOAA in each target area are as follows:

Restoring and Protecting Coastal Habitats and Increasing Public Access

Accomplishment: The Public Access Authorities are providing a new tool for public access acquisition and management through a local policy framework enabled by state legislation.

Accomplishment: The Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program's place-based restoration efforts have been highly successful, leveraging significant funding from partners and resulting in "on the ground" coastal habitat improvements.

Progress This Period (April 2020 – September 2020):

The Virginia CZM Program and DCR completed acquisition of a 20.9 acre addition to the Cape Charles Natural Area Preserve on the Eastern Shore of Virginia in Northampton County (see FY 17 and FY18 Tasks 9). Virginia CZM also continued to work with the Chief of the Chickahominy Tribe on acquisition of a parcel on the Chickahominy River using FY 18 and FY19 CZM funds. Work is underway to secure matching funds from the VA Land Conservation Fund with a proposal due Nov 30.

VA CZMP initiated a three-year focal area in October 2017 to be implemented by state agencies and Planning District Commissions - Promoting Sustainable Coastal Industries: Shellfish Aquaculture and Ecotourism. Working with two of coastal Virginia's economic strengths, aquaculture and tourism, the VA CZMP is supporting projects that will help boost the shellfish aquaculture and ecotourism industries through research, planning and visual tool development (see Section A reports for FY18 and 19 Tasks 71-75). Program visibility is also included in this

focal area since this is a critical time for Congress and the public to understand the value of CZM funds. Ensuring that acknowledgement signs for projects that VA CZMP has funded over the years are still in place, and updated as needed, is critical to program visibility and is one of the subjects of this focal area. The FY17 and 18 grants are finishing up and the FY19 grant is, underway. This focal area also includes protection of vulnerable natural and community coastal resources through Tasks 82-84 (see Section A report for progress on these tasks).

FY17 funds (about \$20k) that had been allocated for updated signage were reprogrammed to restore a public access walkway on the Seaside of VA's Eastern Shore that was constructed with CZM funds in 2004. The boardwalk restoration is complete as is the signage (see Section A FY17 Task 76. A dedication ceremony is planned for November 2.

Ocean Planning

Accomplishment: The VA CZMP's leadership in regional ocean planning has brought together diverse stakeholders to plan for the location of future offshore facilities while minimizing user conflicts and impacts to coastal resources.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the VA CZMP to continue its leadership role in regional ocean planning and to plan for how the work will move forward over the next five years, including continued emphasis on ways to diversify and leverage funding.

Progress This Period (April 2020 September 2020): The CZM Program Manager continued to lead several ocean planning efforts for the Mid-Atlantic. She continued to serve on the Steering Committee of the MARCO's Mid-Atlantic Committee on the Ocean (MACO). Throughout this period, the Virginia CZM Program Manager continued work on a grant to The Nature Conservancy to develop an offshore wind siting tool (see FY 19 Task 94.02 Section A report). She also continued to lead the Marine Debris Reduction Work Group and MARCO's Ocean Mapping & Data Team. Links to documents produced by those two groups are in the FY19 Task 1.01 Section A report for this period.

The Marine Debris Work Group continued work on its \$149k grant from the NOAA Marine Debris Program to expand Virginia's balloon release reduction social marketing campaign to the entire Mid-Atlantic region. Monitoring of balloon debris was stymied this spring due to COVID but plans are underway for fall 2020 monitoring. The work group continued collaboration with 3 Mid-Atlantic aquariums (NY, Baltimore and VA) to test and disseminate messages about not releasing balloons. Recently the national Aquarium Conservation Partnership (a group formed by the Monterey Bay Aquarium) agreed to join the work group and help disseminate social marketing materials once developed.

The VA CZM Manager continued to serve as the Virginia representative on MARCO's Management Board. Materials developed by MARCO are available on the MARCO website at <http://midatlanticocean.org/>.

Coastal Resilience

Accomplishment: The VA CZMP's leadership in coastal resilience has enhanced the capacity of local partners for adaptation planning and promoted the use of living shoreline approaches to enhance community and ecological resilience.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management recommends that the VA CZMP further define the program's "niche" as it relates to coastal resilience.

Progress This Period (April 1, 202 – September 30, 2020): The Virginia CZM Program continued to address this recommendation by focusing its efforts on building coastal resilience in two key areas identified in the Section 309 Coastal Hazards Strategy. The Strategy targets community resiliency (the built environment) and shoreline resiliency (natural and nature-based features). Projects funded through the Strategy should ultimately lead to new enforceable policies that advance coastal resiliency in these two areas. Resilience-building projects are also being funded through the Virginia CZM Program's current Resilience Focal Area, which includes support for regional activities through additions to the technical assistance grants of the eight planning district commissions, as well as three other projects. (see below for details on current projects)

The first year (October 2016 to September 2017) focused on acquiring the data necessary to develop local shoreline management plans, and on providing training for shoreline contractors and local government officials responsible for shoreline management decisions. Two regional projects designed to improve community resilience in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads were also completed.

Progress for the second year (October 2017 to September 2018) included more work to promote better shoreline management and the use of living shorelines, but also two community resilience projects. The first was designed to promote local adoption or expansion of the community rating system under the national flood insurance program, while the second will provide coastal communities with a tool to comprehensively evaluate their current resiliency efforts.

Progress for the third year (October 2018 to September 2019) included the following:

- evaluating living shoreline performance
- refining the shoreline management model and running new analyses
- supporting regional adaptation planning in Northern Virginia
- analyzing first floor elevations in Hampton Roads
- developing a Tidal Shoreline Policies Handbook
- shoreline management training for local officials
- shoreline evolution analyses, evaluating localities for Community Rating System participation
- promoting the beneficial use of dredged material

- developing a database of potential resilience-building projects

Progress for the fourth year (October 2019 to September 2020) included the following:

- evaluating the impacts of flooding on road network access in coastal Virginia
- living shoreline contractor training and shoreline erosion analysis
- refining the RAFT (Resilience and Adaptation Feasibility Tool) for broader implementation
- enhancing and promoting a coastal resilience project proposal database for Virginia
- expanding the use of natural and nature-based infrastructure to enhance coastal resiliency
- living shoreline sea level resiliency: performance and adaptive management
- regional collaboration to build community resiliency in Northern Virginia
- coastal hazard vulnerability assessment for Hampton Roads

Seven resilience-related projects are currently underway for FY 20.

- Evaluating the impacts of flooding on road network access in coastal Virginia (309 Hazards Strategy)
- RAFT evaluation for Middle Peninsula Localities (309 Hazards Strategy)
- Expanding participation in the community rating system (309 Hazards Strategy)
- Utilizing Planning District Commissions (PDCs) to Advance Ecosystem and Community Resilience (CZM Focal Area Grants to 8 coastal PDCs)
- Conservation Targeting for Resilience (CZM Focal Area Grant)
- Promoting Ecotourism to Support Conservation of Conserved Lands and Resilient Communities (CZM Focal Area Grant)
- Climate-Adaptive Nearshore Natural and Nature-based Restoration Projects in the York and Piankatank Rivers and Mobjack Bay (CZM Focal Area Grant)